



Government and Community Affairs

Vanda B. McMurtry, Ph.D., J.D.
Vice President

September 15, 2006

The Honorable Tom Coburn
United States Senate
172 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-3604

Dear Senator Coburn:

Thank you for your request dated July 27, 2006, for information regarding federal appropriations received by the University of Pennsylvania ("Penn") from 2000 to the present.

Penn is one of the nation's top research universities. It spends more than \$700 million annually on research and related activities. The federal government provides 80% of our sponsored research with foundations, corporations and other sources contributing the remainder. Over the last six years, Penn has received more than 12,000 awards from the federal government. In FY2006, Penn received \$641 million in federally sponsored research funds in some 2,000 awards. This is an increase over FY2000, when Penn received \$438 million in some 1,400 awards. The overwhelming majority of these funds, in excess of 98%, are competitively awarded to Penn through the peer review process, which allocates funding based on informed judgments of the merit of competing research proposals. It is a longstanding policy of ours to support a strong research program based on merit and not to make requests that put merit-reviewed funding at risk.

Penn has made rare requests for non-competitively awarded funds at the federal level. While we acknowledge that this represents an exception to our typical practice, we believe that it is appropriate for a few projects where there is no threat to the merit-review process and where the projects otherwise cannot be pursued. Each request of this kind is subject to a rigorous review by the leadership of the relevant school or center and is reviewed again by a group of senior officers of Penn. Only those requests that meet our high standards are allowed to go forward.

I hope that this information is useful to you. Please do not hesitate to contact me at your convenience if you have further questions or comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Vanda B. McMurtry".

Vanda B. McMurtry
Vice President for Government
and Community Affairs